

- (c) the views of each State in this regard; and
- (d) the steps being taken to avoid such situation in the remaining period of the Eleventh Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARISH RAWAT): (a) to (d) The problems faced by farmers are multi-dimensional and dynamic which are being resolved gradually with joint efforts of the Government of India and the State Governments.

Government accords high priority to agriculture sector and has taken many initiatives in recent years for revitalization of the sector to increase production and productivity, reduction of distress to farmers and enhancement of their incomes. The initiatives, *inter-alia*, includes— (i) Substantial increase in investment in Agriculture sector during the Eleventh Five Year Plan through launching of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and National Food Security Mission (NFSM) with outlay of Rs. 25,000 crore and Rs. 4882.48 crore, respectively; (ii) Strengthening of existing schemes such as National Horticulture Mission, Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme and Micro Irrigation scheme during current plan period; (iii) Implementation of Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 benefitting about 3.69 crore farmers, involving relief/waiver of Rs. 65318.33 crore; (iv) Implementation of Rehabilitation Package of Rs. 16978.69 crore for 31 suicide prone districts in four States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala; and (v) Substantial increase of Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of various crops in recent years to make farming more remunerative.

These initiatives have resulted in desired outcomes as evidenced by the record production of foodgrains, pulses, oilseeds and cotton during the year 2010-11.

Further, Initiatives like bringing Green Revolution to Eastern Region, Rainfed Area Development Programme, Integrated Development of 60,000 pulses villages in rainfed areas, promotion of Oil Palm, Initiative on Vegetable Clusters, Nutri-cereals, National Mission for Protein Supplements, and Accelerated Fodder Development Programme, short term crop loans to farmers at 7 per cent interest with 3 per cent interest additional subvention for timely repayment, etc. announced in Union Budget 2011-12 are also being implemented to boost agricultural productivity, removal of distress to the farmers and make agricultural sector play its desired role in economic growth of the country.

Supply of cono weeders to farmers

483. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) are not able to cater to the demand of farmers to supply cono weeder, a simple, hand-operated device to remove weeds from the paddy field;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and district-wise, where KVKs could not match with the demand; and

(c) the steps the Ministry would take to supply the weeder to farmers at subsidized rates and popularize it among farmers across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARISH RAWAT):
(a) and (b) Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) do not generally supply or sell cono weeders or other equipments to farmers. KVKs are mandated to test and demonstrate technologies; train farmers and extension personnel; and create awareness on improved agricultural technologies. In order to popularize and to test and demonstrate the usefulness of this tool in paddy cultivation among farmers across the country, as many as 190 KVKs have taken up various activities on cono weeder benefiting 1.23 lakh farmers during Eleventh Plan.

(c) Financial assistance to the farmers, upto Rs. 3,000/- or 50% of the cost whichever is less, is being provided through the State Governments under the schemes “Macro Management of Agriculture” and “National Food Security Mission” for purchase of cono weeder. There are six leading manufacturers in the country having annual combined manufacturing capacity of nearly 3 lakh cono weeders, per annum.

Death of fishermen

484. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently there were deaths of fishermen in the sea in Mumbai due to sinking of their boats;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any Central scheme is in place to help the distressed families of such fishermen who lose their lives during fishing; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHARAN DAS MAHANT): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, in the Raigad and Thane districts of the State, due to stormy winds and heavy rainfall five mechanised fishing vessels had sunk and six fishermen from Raigad district lost their lives during September’2011.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Under the component ‘Group Accident Insurance for Active Fishermen’ of the Centrally Sponsored ‘National Scheme of Welfare of Fishermen’ there is a provision to help the distressed families of such fishermen by providing insurance coverage of ` 1,00,000/- for death or permanent/total disability and ` 50,000/- for partial disability. The